



Notice of Development

Published in Grand Junction Daily Sentinel on November 24, 2021

Location

Mesa County, Colorado

Notice Text

NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY TO OBJECT

Ouray Silver Mining Plan & Fringe Lease Application

USDA Forest Service

Grand Mesa Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests

Ouray and Norwood Ranger Districts

Ouray and San Miguel Counties, Colorado

Chad Stewart, Forest Supervisor of the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests, has released his draft Decision Notice and the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Ouray Silver Mining Plan & Fringe Lease Application. The analysis in the EA is a coordinated effort between the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests and the Bureau of Land Management's Uncompahgre Field Office (BLM). Approval of the Ouray Silver Mining Plan & Fringe Lease Application would allow Ouray Silver Mines, Inc (OSMI) to mine underground vein deposits on 152 fringe leasing acres that are currently under National Forest System (NFS) surface management and would be opened for a fringe lease under BLM authority at 43 CFR 3500. All proposed mining activities would be performed underground and no surface disturbance or occupancy of public lands is planned. Area of fringe lease claims is approximately 152 acres adjacent to private patented property owned by OSMI. Mine workings are on the north side of the divide between San Miguel County and Ouray County. Thirty-six (36) acres are in San Miguel County and the majority, 116 acres, is within Ouray County, Colorado. The general Project area is mixed-use including recreation, mining, and wildlife habitat.

The proposed NFS lands are immediately adjacent to OSMI claims and contain mineral deposits that can be accessed underground from the existing Revenue Tunnel, which is owned by OSMI.

This proposal is needed to mine federally owned minerals under NFS lands in order to continue development of adjacent patented mineral claims. A mineral lease application is being processed under BLM's Fringe Leasing regulations (43 CFR 3510: Noncompetitive Leasing, Fringe Acreage Leases and Lease Modifications), which requires consent of the surface managing agency, the US Forest Service. Issuance of the fringe lease would extend life of the existing mine by approximately 15 to 20 years.

Mr. Stewart has decided to consent to lease as described under the Proposed Action for NFS lands including all lease stipulations identified in the EA and Draft Decision. BLM will make a subsequent leasing decision approving or denying issuance of the fringe leases.

Additional information can be found in the EA and my Draft Decision Notice at the following weblink:

><https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=58860>

Filing an Objection

This decision is subject to a predecisional objection period in accordance with the provisions of 36 CFR 218 subparts A and B. Objections must be filed with the reviewing officer in writing. All objections are available for public inspection during and after the objection process. Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted and timely, specific written comments regarding the proposed project or activity and attributed to the objector, unless the issue is based on new information that arose after the opportunities for comment on the Preliminary EA.

At a minimum, an objection must include the following: (1) Objector's name and address as defined in 36 CFR 218.2, with a telephone number, if available; (2) Signature or other verification of authorship upon request (a scanned signature for electronic mail may be filed with the objection); (3) When multiple names are listed on an objection, identification of the lead objector as defined in 36 CFR 218.2. Verification of the identity of the lead objector must be provided upon request or the reviewing officer will designate a lead objector as provided in 36 CFR 218.5(d); (4) The name of the proposed project, the name and title of the responsible official, and the name(s) of the national forest(s) and/or ranger district(s) on which the proposed project will be implemented; (5) A description of those aspects of the proposed project addressed by the

objection, including specific issues related to the proposed project; if applicable, how the objector believes the environmental analysis or draft decision specifically violates law, regulation, or policy; suggested remedies that would resolve the objection; supporting reasons for the reviewing officer to consider; and (6) A statement that demonstrates the connection between Objector's prior specific written comments on the particular proposed project or activity and the content of the objection, unless the objection concerns an issue that arose after the designated opportunities for comment (i.e., after November 23, 2020). Incorporation of documents by reference is permitted only as provided for at 36 CFR 218.8(b).

Due to COVID-19 related office restrictions, objections, including attachments, must be filed (regular mail or online) with the Reviewing Officer (see 36 CFR 218.3 and 218.8) within 45 days of the publication of the legal notice in the Grand Junction Daily Sentinel. The publication date of the legal notice in the Grand Junction Daily Sentinel is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an objection. Those wishing to object should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. Evidence of timely filing is described in 36 CFR 218.9. Please submit objections to the Reviewing Officer at:

Written objections may be submitted via U.S. Postal Service to:

USDA Forest Service Rocky Mountain Region

Attn: Reviewing Officer

P.O. Box 18980

Golden, CO 80402

Electronic objections must be filed online; attachments may be included in a variety of formats (such as pdf, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or MSWord (.doc)) In cases where no identifiable name is attached to an electronic message, a verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature is one way to provide verification.

Objections and attachments may be submitted online at: <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public//CommentInput?Project=58860>

If you have any questions or need assistance accessing documents, please contact Niccole Mortenson, NEPA Specialist, at niccole.mortenson@usda.gov or 970-874-6693.

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